



Major County Sheriffs' Association

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November 12th, 2014

The Honorable Buck McKeon
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2310 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2264 Rayburn House Office
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McKeon and Ranking Member Smith,

As President of the Major County Sheriffs' Association (MCSA), I write to you today on the 1033 program and its critical importance to law enforcement agencies, departments and officers across the Nation. Increased attention has been paid to this program over the last several months, particularly in the wake of specific events that have recently transpired in the town of Ferguson, Missouri.

As a career law enforcement professional, and on behalf of MCSA, I want to communicate the value of this program to you and the Committee. As you are aware, the 1033 program provides State and Local law enforcement agencies with a broad spectrum of controlled and uncontrolled equipment that the Department of Defense (DoD) no longer has a need to maintain, but that is proven to be useful for law enforcement and/or public safety purposes.

Recent scrutiny of the 1033 program has focused on a number of issues, particularly the types of equipment provided, as well as deployment doctrine and training protocols. In many ways, this scrutiny has led to some perceptions that have overshadowed reality.

In the vast majority of cases, equipment provided to law enforcement via 1033 authority is used for routine policing, day-to-day patrolling and basic administrative purposes. In fact, uncontrolled items such as boots, computers and filing cabinets comprise the most common types of materiel transferred from DoD inventory to State and Local law enforcement agencies. Additionally, most of the equipment utilized by State and Local law enforcement is for entirely defensive purposes, giving officers an added layer of ballistic protection or providing extra cover to citizens in harms' way. As an example, armored vehicles have been particularly useful in highly dangerous active shooter situations, often giving police and civilians a mobile "safe box" to evacuate an area of hostile fire.

Other assets are used for critical, time-sensitive operations. For example, surplus helicopters are used by law enforcement to conduct rescue operations and to search for both missing persons and wanted suspects. Some items, like power generators and first-aid kits, support disaster relief efforts or are used to treat the

sick and wounded. Whether discussing bulletproof vests or armored vehicles, 1033 items are regularly used to enhance officer safety and protect the public.

Finally, it should be noted that transferring equipment from DoD to U.S. law enforcement under 1033 extends the life of equipment already purchased once by the U.S. taxpayer. For any government agency – be it Federal, State or local – finding ways to reduce operating cost is paramount during an enduring period of tight finances and shrinking budgets.

As career law enforcement officers, we certainly understand the need for program oversight and accountability. We also need to ensure that training standards for certain types of equipment are appropriate and that deployment decisions are made by experienced law enforcement personnel.

However, based on our firsthand, operational experience, the 1033 program remains invaluable and law enforcement agencies across the Nation have made considerable use of 1033 assets to preserve the lives of officers and civilians alike – all while saving taxpayer dollars.

We hope that the overwhelmingly positive aspects of this important program, some of which are detailed here, are taken into strong consideration as the Committee explores this important set of issues. Should you or your staff have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me via the information provided in this document. We look forward to engaging with your Committee and the Congress on these matters ahead.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alan Lyons". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alan" and last name "Lyons" clearly distinguishable.

President, Major County Sheriffs' Association
Sheriff-Coroner, Kern County (CA)